

"During the investigations carried out in tropical America by the Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, with a view to securing new and promising varieties of the avocado for trial in the United States, a secondary object was constantly borne in mind,- the discovery of wild avocados.

"It has long been known that the small-fruited Mexican avocado, botanically classified as variety *drynifolia* of the common avocado, *Persea americana*, occurs abundantly as a wild tree upon the lower slopes of the Volcano Orizaba in Mexico. In all probability it is indigenous in that region. This form is not, however, of much value horticulturally, and it does not seem to represent the wild prototype of the cultivated West Indian and Guatemalan varieties.

"In 1920, Oton Jimenez and I discovered, upon the slopes of the Volcano Irazu in central Costa Rica, a wild avocado which bears much greater resemblance to the large-fruited forms of horticulture. It may be that this is the true prototype or wild ancestor of some of these forms.

"This avocado, known locally as 'aguacate de anis,' occurs on hillsides and along ravines at elevations between 4,500 and 5,000 feet. While we have seen it only in the vicinity of La Palma, it doubtless occurs in other parts of central Costa Rica. The fruiting habit of the tree suggests the Guatemalan race of horticulture, as also the hard, granular shell of the fruit itself. In the possession of a strong anise-like odor in the leaves, bark, and fruit, however, this wild form differs from all cultivated varieties of the Guatemalan race, as well as the West Indian.

"The tree grows to about 40 feet in height, and is erect, almost slender in habit. The leaves are thicker and stiffer than is common in cultivated avocados, glabrous on the upper surface and sparsely puberulent below. The fruits, so far as has been observed, are borne singly on stout fruitstalks 4 inches or more in length. They are roundish oblate in form, and 2 to 3 inches in diameter. The surface is moss-green, pebbled or slightly rough; the skin or shell is about one-tenth of an inch thick, very coarsely granular in texture, hard and woody. The flesh is pale yellow changing to greenish toward the shell. There are no fibers through the flesh, but there are numerous small, hard bodies like the stone cells of Chinese pears. These give the flesh a gritty feeling in the mouth. The flavor is strong, suggesting anise, at the same time rich and nutty, as in the cultivated avocados. The seed is very large, oblate in form, with both seed coats adhering closely to the cotyledons.

"The flowering season in the Costa Rican highlands is in March and April, and the fruits ripen a year from the following May or June, after having been on the tree 12 to 15 months.

"At the time this species was discovered in 1920, it was possible